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Empire, as far as we have it, is the most convincing argument we have yet met, in favor of the modern method of writing national history. Even a casual reader of these two volumes must feel that the author is far more at home when writing on English history than he is when writing on contemporary Celtic history and that he handles with a much surer touch Tudor or Stuart history than he does English medieval history. In fact, frankly, the reviewer suspects that the author's studies in the medieval field have never gone much beyond Freeman and Stubbs or at best Maitland. At least his treatment of this period shows little or no acquaintance with recent critical work. But even within these limitations, he has not always taken the pains to understand his authorities or represent them clearly. Note particularly his treatment of Anglo-Saxon methods of trial on pages 77-78, or of Henry II.'s innovations in methods of procedure on pages 188-189.

The second volume is better. The general summaries are very good; particularly the chapter, From Medieval to Modern, in which are summed up the various influences that launched Europe into the new era. Yet strangely enough the author is silent upon the economic influences that were just as surely preparing men's minds for the break with the old order as new theories of nature, or of Church and State.

Throughout the writer labors under the handicap of a style that lacks both precision and lucidity, and at times even dignity—certainly a style that is entirely unsuited to the class of readers that he avowedly seeks to reach.

In passing, we note the reappearance of Freeman's absurdly pedantic spellings of Anglo-Saxon proper names, as well as the old stockade wall at Hastings that once so aroused the wrath of Mr. Round. William is also given credit for bestowing palatine powers upon the Bishop of Durham. Our old friend, "the bull *Laudabiliter*", also raises its head, although somewhat timidly. So also reappears van Tromp's broom, sweeping the channel, a bit of vainglory of which the honest Dutchman was not guilty.

B. T.

English Farming Past and Present. By ROWLAND E. PROTHERO. (London, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Company. 1912. Pp. xiii, 504.)

IN the study of history, nothing is more remarkable than the widening field of historical research, the cultivation of which must precede the writing of real history. In earlier times attention was concentrated on great personages, especially the political and military leaders of nations; and religious leaders received attention, but probably inadequate attention, except in those cases (to be sure frequent) where they were at the same time political leaders, like Mohammed and Moses. Moses helped to form a nation and no one could write the history of the Jews without writing about that statesman and religious teacher, but it is extremely doubtful if the influence of that great Jewish law-giver in American history has been adequately described.

The nineteenth century witnessed a violent reaction from the great-man theory of history. Carlyle still made events turn on the hero, but John Richard Green of the succeeding generation of historians typified the reaction in his *History of the English People*. McMaster's *History of the People of the United States* stands for the same theory of history. Possibly the reaction has gone too far because, after all, history is largely shaped by the kind of man, called hero by Carlyle, the man "who can", even if king is not derived from *können*.

In this modern epoch we go to sources, and extend constantly our search for documents into new fields. The economic field especially absorbs attention and while the economist becomes historical, the historian writes economic history; and an overlapping of the fields is found, which in the curriculum of a modern university is often perplexing. Machinery and new sources of power produce revolutionary effects, designated as the Industrial Revolution, treated now by the economists, now by the professional historians. The history of labor has at last received attention and historians must now familiarize themselves with works like the *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, prepared under the auspices of the American Bureau of Industrial Research, by a group of workers led by Professor John R. Commons, Professor Ulrich B. Phillips, and others. All these fields must admittedly be worked by the modern historian, and then he has not attained rank as a great historian until he knows how to treat his material so as to make his writing literature. The task is overwhelming.

But strangely enough one of the very greatest fields of research has been, comparatively speaking, unworked, one which will prove particularly fruitful, and that is the field of agriculture. But what the present writer has in mind is not technical agriculture, not a discussion of how crops grow and what fertilizers to use on the land to give more abundant yields, but rather the legal, the economic, and the social side of agriculture. Above all things the future historian will concern himself with those questions which centre about the institution of landed property, involving questions of large and small holdings, of tenancy, of the status of agricultural labor, of free land and its disappearance, etc. Questions connected with landed property, for example, lie at the very heart of the history of Ireland, and the failure to work out a satisfactory land policy for Ireland and the struggles about the land make up a chief part of Irish history, and afford the main explanation of the relations of England and Ireland for the last two hundred years, even up to the present day. A new treatment of landed property in Ireland is ushering in a new epoch in Irish history; and had it come fifty years earlier, a good deal of contemporary English history would be different. The heart of English history to-day is found connected with landed property, and the way the subject is treated by the English Parliament will be one of the chief forces, perhaps the chief force, shaping English history for generations to come.

Reflections like these are natural in reading the master work *English Farming Past and Present*, by Rowland E. Prothero. Take, for example, the wars between Napoleon I. and England; how many historians understand that changes in landed property, already under way but stimulated by these wars, were one of the prime conditions of England's final victory? Yet one who reads Prothero finds it difficult to understand how without the enclosures and the accompanying improvements in agriculture England could have won. "Turnip" Townshend and men of his age showed how land could be cultivated continuously with increasing yields, and enclosure made possible modern farming, which increased the productivity of English farms in many instances three and fourfold and even more. Speaking of the great improvements made in English agriculture in the eighteenth century and especially after the accession of George III. (1760), due largely to men like Jethro Tull, Lord Townshend, Bakewell of Dishley, Arthur Young, and Coke of Norfolk, Prothero says:

The improvements which these pioneers initiated, taught, or exemplified, enabled England to meet the strain of the Napoleonic Wars, to bear the burden of additional taxation, and to feed the vast centres of commercial industry which sprang up, as if by magic, at a time when food supplies could not have been provided from another country. Without the substitution of separate occupation for the ancient system of common cultivation, this agricultural progress was impossible (p. 149).

All historians and economists are familiar with the terms common fields and enclosures; but it is to be feared that to comparatively few do these terms convey correct, clear, and adequate ideas. Frequently even writers of distinction evidently have in mind free land or at least publicly owned land, like the American public domain, when they think of the common fields of England, and when they hear of the suffering of the poor, connected with enclosures, their ideas are vague and confused, indeed; but it is apparent that often writers believe that publicly owned or free land was fenced in by the great landed magnates and was stolen from the smaller men, who thus lost, without compensation, rights of pasturing cows and of more or less free feed for other animals, etc. Every reader of Prothero should be enabled to put aside ideas of this kind, which one finds here and there even in England. Elsewhere Mr. Prothero has used these words:

You cannot pick up a paper without seeing a letter, generally signed by Adam or Eve, or by some equally prehistoric person, in which they say the land belonged to the people; it has been filched from the people by the landlords under the inclosures of the last 200 years. You may look at any paper, and day after day you will see that statement repeated. On what do they go? They think that, because half of the land of the country at the beginning of the eighteenth century was in common fields, and there was a great deal of pasture in common with

that land, any person might go with his fork and dig up a piece of land, and go with his cow and turn it out on a piece of grass. Now we know perfectly well that the common field, the arable field, to which that phrase refers, was just as much a tenancy as the modern farm. They were tenants in partnership, and the common was no more the property of the public than my small garden in London is the property of the public. It was occupied pastorally by the men who farmed the arable land, and they took care of their own rights sharply enough. If any one of the public turned a horse or a cow or a sheep on that land they seized it and put it in the pound (taken from *Journal of the Farmers' Club*, May, 1913, p. 83, col. 2).

All this receives further amplification and substantiation in the book under review.

The conditions of land tenure before the Norman Conquest are uncertain. As another modern authority (Mr. H. R. Rew, assistant secretary of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries) has said, "The social and economic history of this country before the coming of the English is a matter of guesses and inferences. Until William the Conqueror issued the first Royal Commission on Agriculture, and collected the first Agricultural Returns, our knowledge of English rural life is very scanty." That survey, known as the Domesday, reveals the manorial system, from which by an evolutionary process the present conditions of tenure are a growth. All land had theoretically its lord, its owner, but the owner had many obligations and his rights were limited by those of various classes of tenants. The farmers were co-operators, or, to use a phrase quite as accurate, they formed a partnership, and the word common, in common arable fields and common pastures, refers to common rights of the partnership. Enclosure signified the dissolution of the partnership; the division of rights and cultivation in severalty instead of common cultivation.

The historian who would understand the agrarian side of the economic revolution (called the Industrial Revolution) must distinguish between common arable field and common pastures. Both exist now, but the former are rapidly disappearing. It was the good fortune of the present reviewer in the summer of 1913 to visit the common arable fields at Elmstone-Hardwicke in Gloucestershire, which are about to be enclosed; also those at Laxton (or Lexington) in Nottinghamshire; and no historian or economist who can do so, should fail to see with his eyes a modern enclosure. At Elmstone-Hardwicke one can see in miniature rolled out before him a large piece of English social history. The little scattered strips still exist, and a man may have a farm of a hundred acres in forty or fifty pieces held by tenancy, scattered over a great field. In one place in Scotland, one piece of land of some ten acres is divided into over one hundred strips or bits, each with its separate title of ownership or tenancy. At Elmshire-Hardwicke, as at Laxton, one sees the discouragement of the tenant farmers, pursuing antiquated methods of husbandry, unable to drain and improve their

land because of dependence on others in the partnership, and suffering from thriftless neighbors who allow weeds to grow on their strips. One sees also the man who, after the harvest, when common rights of pasture begin, turns in sheep and secures far more than his share of the common pasturage.

The tenants earnestly desire the abolition of the antiquated, thriftless system and the reviewer found no difference of opinion; they expected to gain as well as the landowner.

But the social historian may ask, where is the injustice in the enclosures, of which we hear so much? There was injustice frequently and at times grievous injustice and there was much loss and suffering which cannot be described as injustice. All this is made clear by Prothero. Injustice resulted when in the dissolution of the partnership between the tenants on the one hand and the landlord on the other and among the tenants themselves, some common rights were not succeeded by corresponding separate rights or rights in severalty or did not receive any compensation at all or received inadequate compensation. But this was not the main cause of suffering, which was due to the inability of the small man to hold his own, just as in manufactures he could not hold his own. Small bits of land which were assigned to tenant farmers and cottagers as equivalent of their common rights, were often sold even before they were received into ownership; because they were unsuitable in area for cultivation or because they were worth more to the large than the small owner; or because of lack of forethought or because of downright thriftlessness. No good opportunities were presented for small investments and money payments were often lost. Small money payments are still received by those who had rights in common arable fields and when these amount to a few shillings each, they sometimes are used up in dissipation—a general debauch. But in 1913 the reviewer also visited Epworth, where one finds unenclosed fields but with an abolition of common rights, the strips remaining and a small farmer owning scattered strips, just as is so frequently found in Germany, particularly in southern Germany. Here there are annual payments coming to the former common owners, but they are payments in fuel, “coals” instead of money, a bag or two of coals coming every year or two to the owners of these rights. The vicar, for example, had a few hundred pounds of coals, about a couple of years ago.

But the great evil in the enclosures was the separation of the worker from the land so far as any fixed rights are concerned. Formerly there were economic ties binding the land and the farmer and the laborer. All had a definite standing place in the community. A right to pasture a cow was a tie. Now after enclosure often only a cash nexus remained, and that was weak indeed, and agrarian changes were accompanied by the disappearance of domestic industries; thus from two sides the basis of life in the country for the small man was attacked. Hence the evils.

These evils were due to a false *laissez-faire* policy, which has disappeared. One great present problem is to replace older institutions with modern ones giving their advantages; but this means the adaptation of the old to new conditions. Thus we hear of common pastures as a proposal of reform: pastures not open to every one—an impossibility—but open to groups, each one with definitely assigned rights. And occasionally one finds such commonage in Ireland, brought about as a result of present Irish land reforms.

After Prothero has spoken of enclosure as a necessary condition of English victory over Napoleon he uses these words:

Without the substitution of separate occupation for the ancient system of common cultivation, this agricultural progress was impossible. But in carrying out the necessary changes, rural society was convulsed, and its general conditions revolutionised. The divorce of the peasantry from the soil, and the extinction of commoners, open-field farmers, and eventually of small freeholders, were the heavy price which the nation ultimately paid for the supply of bread and meat to its manufacturing population (p. 149).

Prothero traces English farming after the Conquest to present times and gives a part of English history without the knowledge of which the whole cannot be understood. Writing for English people primarily, parts of his book, simple and lucid as it is, may not readily be understood by American readers; but he gives abundant reference to other authors where further information can be found. The work is interesting and, unless one has the information it gives, contemporary English politics can only imperfectly be grasped. Prothero is a scholar, "late fellow of All Souls College, Oxford", and as agent of the Duke of Bedford with his vast estates, his life is occupied with land problems, both rural and urban. He takes a broad view and advocates reforms which must be especially interesting to Americans, for he favors the creation of a large body of landowners both for economic and social reasons. His position as to present policy is stated in the final chapter of the book, entitled "Conclusion". The reader will find this chapter interesting matter; and he will find a good deal of pathos, and even tragedy, in the story which tells of the brave struggle of English farmers, who have kept on in adversity and are now giving us farming which is the envy of American observers. But tenant farming is breaking down in England, as it has broken down in Ireland. Nowhere has it shown ability to persist as a general system. In Ireland it has cost hundreds of millions to replace tenancy by ownership; in England, before a new system replaces the old, hundreds of millions of pounds will be expended and with results still uncertain. Is it not time that Americans should busy themselves, while our land is still new, with questions of landed property, with a view of developing land policies which will furnish a safe and satisfactory economic basis for prosperity and a social and political foundation for a self-governing republic? The future of our country turns very largely upon our land policies.